

Stronger Arson Law Wins Assembly Vote

By VINCENT THOMAS
Assemblyman, 68th District

Considerable progress is being made in our special session on the many and varied items but before us by the governor in his original and supplementary proclamations. In the meantime our regular budget session is making time while committees of both houses are reviewing the thousands of details in the proposed \$4.6 billion spending program for 1966-67.

First significant bills to pass the assembly were a series of three related measures dealing with problems arising from the Watts riots of last summer. The most important of the bills would deal with criminal penalties for arson. It would set a minimum five-year sentence for anyone convicted of setting a fire during a state insurrection proclaimed by the governor. It also would make it a felony to manufacture, sell, or possess a fire bomb, with a prison sentence of up to five years. A third provision would make the penalty for setting fire to a commercial structure the same as the existing sentence for firing a residence—2 to 20 years.

A SECOND measure would impose the same penalty for assault on a fireman while performing his duty that existing law provides for an attack on a policeman, a maximum of 15 years in prison. The third, with only the anti-fire-bomb penalty, was passed as a "backup measure" in case the major bill runs into trouble.

The bills were not passed without some vigorous vocal opposition by a number of assemblymen. Most of it was based on the argument that the bills would accomplish nothing, but it is interesting to note that one of the bitterest opponents was the mem-

AT CONFERENCE

Torrance High School homemaker teacher Mrs. Barbara S. Daugherty represented Torrance Unified School District at a workshop on "Dialogues on Parent Involvement in Head Start and Related Programs" at Pacific Oaks College, Pasadena, Saturday.

ber from the Watts district. In the Senate, a bill aimed at better control of drunk driving cleared its first hurdle, and seemed headed for eventual passage. The measure would provide that the granting of a state license to drive a motor vehicle would carry with it the implied consent of the person acquiring the license to his being given chemical tests for sobriety if

he is detained on a drunken driving charge.

THE SENATE Judiciary committee approved the bill, and sent it to the Finance Committee for further action. It was strongly supported by the state administration. The Attorney General stated that issuance of a driver's license is a privilege granted by the state to qualified persons, not

a right which cannot be denied. Therefore, the state has full authority to impose such conditions for issuance as may be legally established.

The author of the bill declared that drunken driving has become a national disgrace, and accounts for a shockingly large proportion of fatal highway accidents. He accepted a few amendments in the committee hearing de-

signed to safeguard the rights of accused persons, such as a requirement that the arresting officers inform them of their rights.

THERE WAS some opposition expressed in the hearing. The spokesman for the Teamsters' Union said that enactment of the measure would constitute "a trespass on civil rights."

Most observers are waiting with interest to find out whether the governor will add constitutional revision to the agenda. The assembly has already unanimously requested him to do so. However, most members of the senate, led by an ex-officio senate member of the Constitutional Revision Commission, are now opposed to adding the subject to the agenda.

Science Fair Winners at Carl Steele School Named

Twenty students received awards in the Carl Steele Elementary School science fair.

Winners in the biological category included: Karen Everett, Jenny Kessler and Mark Hickman, first place; Michael Hopper, Brenda Carrig and James Everett, second place; and Julia Harrison, Teri Meyer and Lee Anacoast, third place.

Kris Wilson, and James Celoni, first place; Robert Schneider, Griff Kimble and Dean Poush, second place, and Michael Patton, Velma Fox, Jacques Dutilleul, Debbie Page and David Johnson, third place.

Judges were William Scott and Donald Lord of Jet Pro.

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A. C. Bortz, San Marino
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